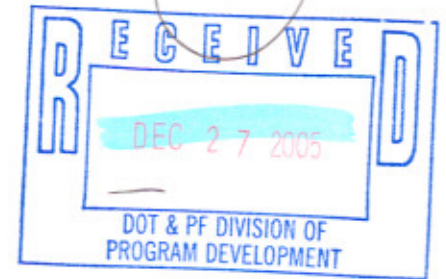


December 22, 2005

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Reference: DRAFT 2006-2008 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program,  
Alaska Highway APLIC and Rest Area.

- In reviewing the draft 2006-08 STIP it has come to my attention that the new Visitor Center planned for Tok is no longer listed. The project was listed in the 2004-2006 STIP as the *Alaska Highway APLIC and Rest Area*. With the design development for this facility near completion and funds available for land acquisition, this project will be ready to move into the construction phase and needs to be identified in the STIP to be eligible for funding.
- For over five years this project has been moving forward in the planning, design and development of a new visitor facility to serve as a State-operated Alaska Public Lands Information Center, a new Tetlin Refuge Visitor Center and rest and trip planning facility for travelers along the Alaska Highway.
- Strategically located in Tok, this facility will serve clients and visitors with comprehensive statewide trip planning and information on access to all of Alaska's public lands, rest and comfort amenities and Alaska Marine Highway reservations. As they enter Alaska and visit this facility, visitors will receive the most professional and inviting welcome befits this Great Land. This was where I first received information as I entered the state of Alaska with my family several years ago. The center will have the most current traveler's information related to road construction, wildfire conditions and weather to assist them with safe travel. I see this as a vital and intricate part of tourism infrastructure in Alaska and would like to see this center and project on the STIP.
- In addition, this project has spawned additional community and tourism projects in Tok. Within the last year the local Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center has been brought into the project with a plan for a connective interpretive pathway between the two facilities and exhibits at the Chamber Visitor Center that will expand the theme of the Tok Interagency Public Lands Facility. This project will have significant economic benefits for Tok and will increase the momentum of regional efforts to promote tourism in Eastern Interior. This project serves as an excellent model of federal/state/local cooperation.